

Hayworth against freeway, for tighter border controls

By Doug Murphy
Staff Writer

Congressman J.D. Hayworth took time during the Congressional spring break to hold a town hall meeting at Desert Vista High School on Wednesday.

And as the advance billing announced, much of the discussion centered on the proposed South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway.



Congressman J.D. Hayworth told the 150 people in the audience that he was concerned about building a freeway so close to schools.

"My job, as your representative, is to listen to you," said Hayworth

who has gone on the record opposing the freeway plan and in support

of the no-build option.

He told the 150 people in the audience that he was concerned about building a freeway so close to schools, which would result in the destruction of homes and change the character of Ahwatukee Foothills.

But he also said that people continue to move to Arizona and there is a need to strike a balance

more Hayworth, see page 5

March 24, 2006 • Ahwatukee Foothills News

Hayworth

from page 1

between protecting neighborhood and providing for future transportation needs.

He offered to help bring the Gila River Indian Community to the table to discuss alternatives, but that he couldn't guarantee what the outcome of any discussions would be.

For Aaron Will, that was good enough.

"I'm glad he's listening."

But Melanie Pai, the founder of Protecting Arizona's Resources and Children, a grassroots organization opposing the freeway on health grounds, wanted more.

"There is a clear concern for public health. What are you willing to do for a lasting change, to protect families from a freeway in close proximity to schools?" Pai asked.

Hayworth suggested that politicians close to the problem should be



Brian A. Barbour/AFN

Ahwatukee Foothills resident Melanie Pai expresses her concerns over pollution from the 202 South Mountain Freeway to Congressman J.D. Hayworth on Wednesday night.

involved first, including Governor Janet Napolitano, but he kept the door open for possible federal action on freeway placement.

"Maybe that is something we should consider," Hayworth said.

But for others, the uncertainty of where the freeway would go and if their homes would be demolished or not was something even a Congressman couldn't help.

"I feel like a hostage. My neighbors feel like hostages," said Richard

DeMauro who lives near Pecos Road and 27th Avenue. His house probably wouldn't be purchased and demolished by the Arizona Department of Transportation to make way for the freeway, but he could have a sound wall just feet from his home if the freeway were built. "People don't know what to do," said DeMauro.

Other topics

While most of the questions were on the freeway, Hayworth also

touched on other topics, including how impressed he was with the number of people who use the park-and-ride lot at 40th Street and Pecos Road.

He also said he opposed efforts to create a guest worker program for illegal immigrants.

"We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws," Hayworth said.

He said that unless something was done he feared that illegal immigrants would eventually become a permanent underclass, separated by language and low wages.

"The United States can not solve the problems of the Republic of Mexico," Hayworth said.

He also said that existing federal laws should be enforced, including cracking down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, before

coming up with new plans.

"If people don't obey existing laws, what makes you think they'll obey proposed laws," Hayworth asked the generally supportive crowd.

The only ripple in the evening was the war in Iraq.

Several people were opposed to the war in Iraq, something that Hayworth supports.

But Melvin Breitner summed up the majority feelings in the room when he belted out, "Do whatever is necessary to get the job done."

Hayworth, a Republican, represents Congressional District 5 that includes all of Ahwatukee Foothills, Tempe and Scottsdale.

Staff writer Doug Murphy can be reached at (480) 898-7914 or dmurphy@aztrib.com.